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ABSTRACT

Hispanics may share a language, a religion, and a similar culture, but they are not a homogeneous group. They are from many different countries, with different histories and ethnicities. This booklet describes the situation of Hispanic Americans, the fastest growing minority group in the country. The largest group of Hispanics in the United States is Mexicans, followed by Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans from 16 different countries. The relative youth of the Hispanic American population and both high fertility and high rates of immigration are all factors in the rapid growth of this population. Ninety percent of Hispanics live in 9 states--5 of them in the Southwest. New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey also have substantial Hispanic populations (varying from 11% in New York to 3% in New Jersey). Most Hispanics of Mexican origin live in the Southwest; most Hispanics of Cuban origin live in Florida; and most Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin live in the Northeast. Hispanics generally have educational attainment lower than the national average. Although they are active members of the country's labor force, they are often forced to take lower paying jobs with less security. These factors contribute to high poverty among Hispanics. This booklet briefly examines the history of Mexican Americans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans in the United States. Immigration of Central and South Americans is also noted. Important issues concerning Hispanic/Americans are immigration laws, future work force and economic impacts, education, English-only laws, and political representation and participation. This report contains 23 references. (DHP/CBH)

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# AMERICA'S HISPANIC HERITAGE

Andrew Vázquez
and
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Ann Arbor, Michigan

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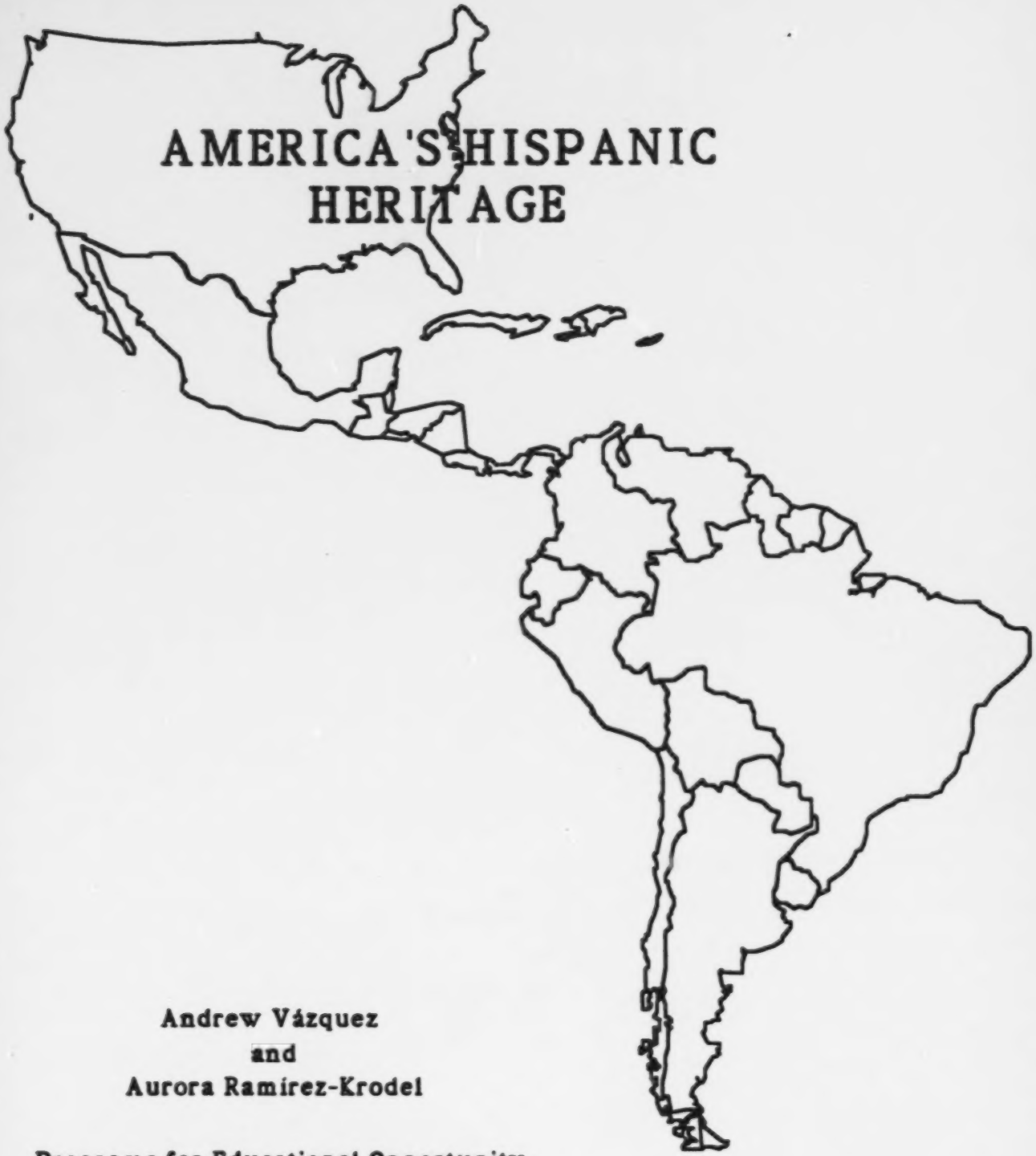

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# AMERICA'S HISPANIC HERITAGE

## An Overview of Hispanics in The United States

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## CONTENTS

Introduction....1

Hispanics: Among the Oldest and Newest Americans....1

Hispanics: An Umbrella Term for a Diverse Population....2

The Fastest Growing Minority Group in the Country....4

Factors Contributing to Population Growth....5

Geographic Distribution....6

Socioeconomic Indicators....7

The America's Spanish Heritage....8

Mexican-Americans: Strangers in Their Native Land....8

Puerto Ricans: American by Conquest....10

Cuban Immigration....11

El Salvadoreans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans: Recent Trends in Immigration....11

South Americans....12

The Hispanic Agenda....12

New Image of Hispanics....14

Conclusion....14

References....14

# AMERICA'S HISPANIC HERITAGE

## INTRODUCTION

If you are like many Americans, you may conjure up stereotypical images when you think of Hispanics. You may think of a Mexican as someone with dark hair and dark eyes, wearing a sombrero and taking a siesta. You may think of a Puerto Rican as a gang member, with a knife or a gun in an urban ghetto, as in West Side Story. You may think of a Cuban as a drug smuggler as in Miami Vice or as a Communist spy. Revolutionaries fighting in the jungles may come to mind, or someone with a bottle of tequila or rum. You may think of rural people living in poverty, with chickens, goats, and many children. You might even imagine someone with a grass hut on the beach, swinging in a hammock, and drinking coconut milk. Most of these stereotypes have come from television, movies, textbooks, or dime store novels. Many have come from those who have traveled and brought back stories and pictures of what they did not understand and often misinterpreted.

We must replace stereotypical images with the images of real people and replace popular misconceptions with correct information. Hispanics are like other people, with their own identities and their own economic, political, and personal realities.

> "My parents, who are both successful, have raised me in a home where Spanish is seldom spoken, but it is always appreciated and respected. Both my parents were brought up in a home where not much more was offered than food to eat and a warm place to sleep, but there was always an abundance of love. It was a home in which religion and education were highly regarded. All of these Hispanic customs and morals that I value so much represent what being Hispanic means to me. These are the things that make me a truly unique individual."

The author, Marisa Perales, was the first place winner in Hispanic magazine's 1989 Hispanic National Essay Contest (1989).

## HISPANICS: AMONG THE OLDEST AND NEWEST AMERICANS

> "Hispanic Americans are at once the oldest and newest immigrants to the United States" (Orum, 1986).

"In 1980, only about one-quarter of [Mexican Americans] were foreign-born, underscoring the fact that they are among the oldest Hispanic groups residing in the United States" (Saragoza, circa 1988). The Spanish colony of St. Augustine was established in 1563, El Paso was founded in 1598, and Santa Fe was established in 1609. The first permanent English colony, Jamestown, was not founded until 1607. Many of the Hispanics who had settled the Southwest long before the American Revolution became American citizens in 1848 when the United States acquired this area in the name of Manifest Destiny.

Recent immigrants from Latin America, as in the case of El Salvadoreans, Nicaraguans, etc. come to the United States for the same reasons as that of the European immigrants who came before them -- the search for political and religious freedom and the hope for a better life. They are escaping possible persecution, political unrest and poverty.

## HISPANICS: AN UMBRELLA TERM FOR A DIVERSE POPULATION

The term Hispanic is an umbrella term used to conveniently describe a large and diverse population. Hispanic subgroups are more like a "tossed salad" than a "melting pot." Hispanics may share a language, a religion, and a similar culture, but it is erroneous to think of Hispanics as a homogeneous group because they are from many different countries, with different histories and ethnicities. We must realize that each Hispanic group is distinct and unique with its own history. Each group has its own relation to this country, and each tends to be concentrated in different geographic areas of the United States. The Spanish language and culture are common to all Hispanics, but even that has diverse facets.

> The two characteristics Hispanics have in common is the heritage of Spanish conquest and culture and the utilization of the Spanish language. Yet, the conquest was experienced differently in the various territories, and the culture was syncretized with specific native folk customs and practices. This produced different and easily recognizable characteristics (Pino; Spielberg 1980, as cited in Melville, 1988).
>
> ...The music of Puerto Rico has a rhythm different from that of Mexico, the dance of Cuba is distinct and foreign to Salvadorians...The symbols used to rally people, such as flags, music, dance, heroes, anniversaries are all distinct (Melville, 1988).

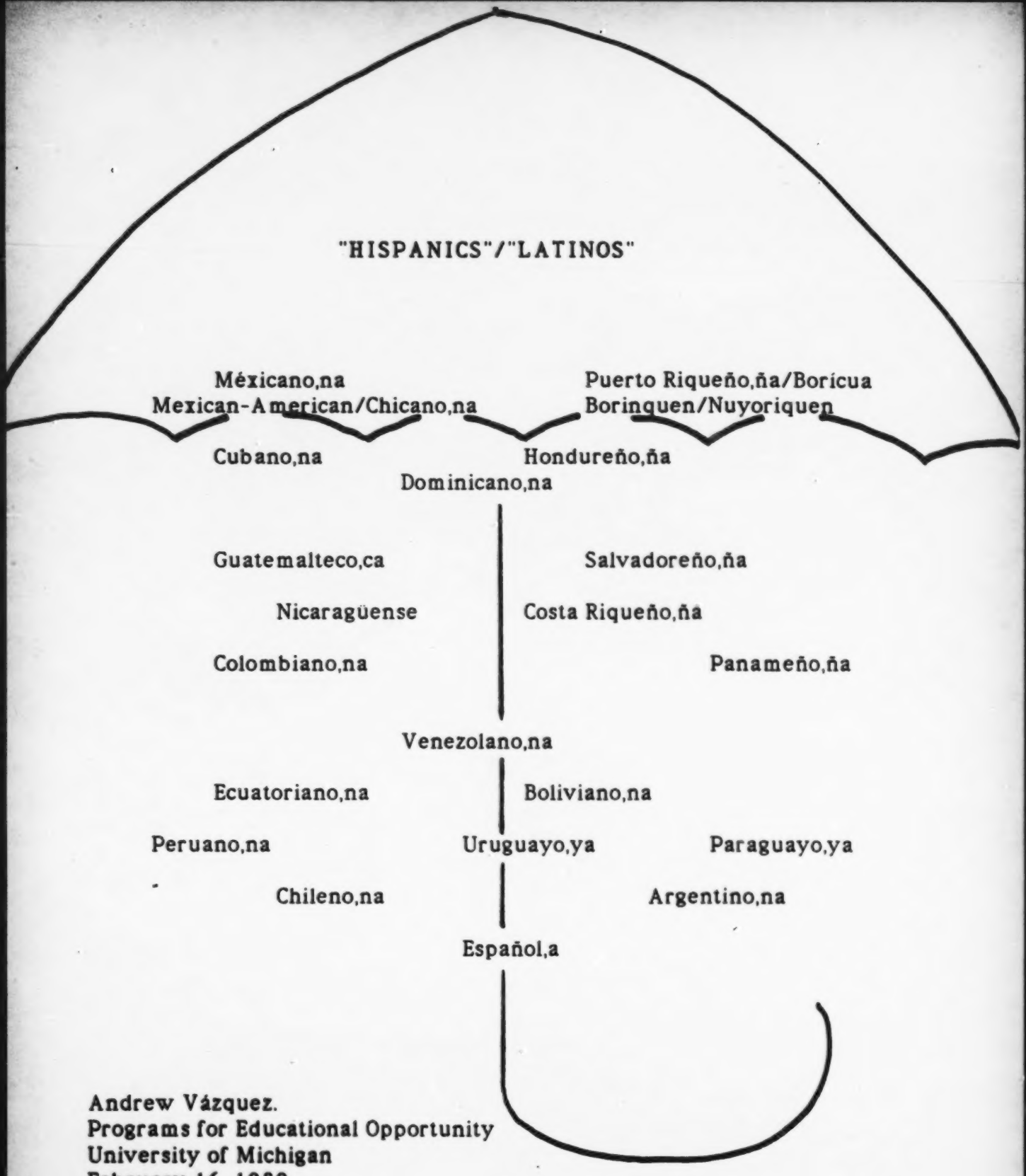
There are many other umbrella or pan-Latin terms that have been used at different times in American history to refer to Hispanics, and many are still being used today. Some of these terms include Latinos, Spanish-speaking, Spanish-origin, Spanish-surname, and Spanish persons. The term Hispanic is the newest umbrella term. "Hispanic" in this country usually means a person from, or with ancestry from, a Spanish speaking country (see graphic).

The term "Hispanic" has a political origin. It began to be used as an official term in 1968 when President Johnson declared National Hispanic Heritage Week to begin the week of September 15 & 16. This was done at the request of then Senator Joseph Montoya, of New Mexico. It is worth noting that there have only been two "Spanish-origin" Senators, Joseph Montoya, 1964-1976, and Dennis Chavez, 1935-1962, also of New Mexico.

In New Mexico, the term "Hispanic" dates back to pre-Mexican independence days when the non-Indian colonists of New Mexico could in fact trace their origins to Spain. The choice of the adjective Hispanic rather than Latino, which was more common in Texas and California, can be traced to the New Mexican influence in Congress (Melville, 1988).

There are other inclusive terms used to group diverse peoples into one pot. The U.S. Census Bureau uses terms for geographic regions such as Central & South America to group people from a number of different countries like El Salvador, Panamá, Venezuela, Colombia, etc. Hispanics come from 20 different countries, and though the United States prefers to use one umbrella term for all, they have 20 different national names: Mexican, Cuban, Venezuelan, etc.(see graphic). Each country has its own distinct ethnic background. They may share a common history of conquest, the Spanish language and culture, but each has developed its own identity.

In the U.S., country of origin names take on another nationalistic dimension. Some people prefer to hyphenate their names, to show their ethnicity and that they are also a part of their adopted country, i.e. Cuban-Americans. Others have different ways of identifying themselves. For example, those of Mexican descent may call themselves Mexican, Mexicano, Chicano, or Mexican-American. Not all people from the same background like to be called the same thing. Many




Andrew Vázquez.
Programs for Educational Opportunity
University of Michigan
February 16, 1989.

Chicanos do not like to be called Mexican-American, and vice versa. In New York City Puerto Rican versus Nuyorican is another example.

The preference for one term over another for self-identification may reflect a person's political viewpoint. It may also reflect the differing historical perspective of the region of the U.S. in which he/she was raised, or the individual's family history in the United States.

Although a term is needed for political unity, one which focuses on the commonality of many distinct groups, we must remember that "there is a strength in numbers when the identity of the component parts is not sacrificed and forgotten" (Melville, 1988).

## THE FASTEST GROWING MINORITY GROUP IN THE COUNTRY

The United States is currently the fifth largest Hispanic populated country in the world behind Mexico, Spain, Argentina, and Colombia. Hispanics are the second largest minority group in the United States, numbering 19.4 million in 1988. By some estimates, they may soon become the largest.

In 1980 the Hispanic population made up 6.4 percent of the total U.S. population and grew to 8.1 percent in 1988. It is projected that by the year 2000, Hispanics will make up 10 percent of the total U.S. population. If current growth rates continue, Hispanics will become the largest minortiy population in the nation by the year 2030. By that same year they will comprise the majority or near majority in California and several other Southwestern states (Bureau of the Census, 1987a).

The actual number of Hispanics may be much larger than the above figures indicate because it is speculated that a vast number of Hispanics were missed in the 1980 census count. In fact, it was estimated that five to ten percent of Hispanics were not counted in 1980 (Montana, 1989).

Mexicans are the largest group of Hispanics in the U.S.; they account for 62 percent of the total Hispanic population. Next in size are the Puerto Ricans who total 13 percent of Hispanics, not including those on the island of Puerto Rico. Cubans are the next major group with 5 percent. Central & South Americans represent 12 percent of the total U.S. Hispanic population. Please keep in mind that Central & South Americans come from 16 different countries. Other Hispanics make up 8 percent of the Hispanic population in the United States.

## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POPULATION GROWTH

### Fertility

One of the factors considered when projecting the Hispanic population rate in the United States is its youthfulness. In 1988 it was estimated that the median age for Hispanics was 25.5 years, compared to 32.2 years for the general population. Among the Hispanic groups Mexican Americans are the youngest with a median age of 23.3 years. The Puerto Rican median is slightly older at 24.3 years. The median age for Cuban Americans, however, is the oldest at 39.1 years (Valdivieso & Davis, 1988).

The relatively young median age of Hispanic women is directly related to the high birth rate of this group. In fact, Hispanic women have the highest fertility rate of all women in the United States. The Bureau of Census recently estimated an annual birth rate of 96 babies per 1000 Hispanic women ages 18 to 44 ; the birth rate for women of the same age in the general population was 71 births per thousand (Bureau of the Census, 1988b). In 1987 births to Hispanic women accounted for 11 percent of all U.S. births. Most of these births are to young mothers, many of them teenage

mothers. For example, more than one out of six Hispanic babies are born to a teen mother (CDF, 1989). This ensures that the Hispanic population will remain a young one well into the 21st century.

### Immigration

Immigration is also a major factor in the growth of the Hispanic population; 34 percent of all immigration since 1960 has come from Latin America, mostly from Mexico. In 1980, Mexico accounted for 29.71 percent of all legal immigration; and 27.95 percent in 1985. "...Mexico was the source of more legal immigrants in 1985 than any other country..." (Bouvier & Gardner, 1986).

> I used to worry about my dad a lot. That I'd never see him again because we left him behind in El Salvador. Now I plan to visit him when I graduate from high school. He will be very proud. I try to think positive, but last year I could hardly think of anything except my heartache and sadness.
>
> (Quoted from a Salvadorean teenager, as cited in Olsen, 1988).

Muller & Espenshade (1985) (as cited in N.C.A.S., 1988), state that 35 percent of all migration since 1960 to the United States has come from Latin America. The Latin American immigrants have come mainly from Mexico (28 percent), El Salvador (4.7 percent), Guatemala (2 percent), Honduras (1.7 percent) and Nicaragua (1.3 percent).

Undocumented immigrants also contribute to the growth of the Hispanic population in the United States. There are different types of undocumented immigrants. Those who settle on a permanent basis affect both the population size and the labor market, while those who do not settle permanently affect only the labor market. The Population Reference Bureau distinguishes between three different types of undocumented immigrants: "...'settlers,' who come to the U.S. on a more or less permanent basis; 'sojourners,' who stay temporarily, such as seasonal farm workers; and 'commuters,' who cross the border daily" (Bouvier & Gardner, 1986).

It is difficult to estimate with any accuracy the number of undocumented immigrants who are coming, or who are already here. In 1986 it was projected that 1.8 million undocumented immigrants would enter the U.S. The counts are not accurate because they are based on the number of arrests, and the notion that for every one arrested, two or three get away. Although undocumented immigrants are to be included in the census count, many do not participate for fear of reprisal. Another problem that makes counting difficult is that many return to their homeland.

Undocumented immigrants are not protected by U.S. law and are therefore easy targets for discrimination by changing immigration legislation. They are also are easy targets for discrimination in employment, education, housing, health services, etc.

With the implementation of the 1986 Immigration Reform Act, discrimination in employment has become more marked. Included in this act are sanctions against those companies that employ undocumented immigrants; there were no employer sanctions before this act was passed. Under threat of large fines and other punitive measures, many companies are overly cautious and have not hired potential employees because they look foreign or have heavy accents.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Most Hispanics (89 percent) live in one of only 9 states, five of which are Southwestern. Around 63 percent of all Hispanics live in the Southwest (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas).

About 55 percent live in California and Texas alone (34 percent and 21 percent respectively), and 11 percent live in New York, 8 percent in Florida, 4 percent in Illinois, and 3 percent in New Jersey. Michigan has the 11th largest Hispanic population in the country. The top five Hispanic cities, in descending order, are: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Antonio, and Houston.

Each Hispanic subgroup is concentrated in a different geographic area, and each has a different history in relation to this country. These different relationships usually dictated why these groups are located where they are today.

> ...83 percent of the Mexican origin population resides in the five Southwestern states, with most living in California or Texas. More than 60 percent of all Cubans live in Florida. Puerto Ricans are concentrated in the Northeast, particularly in New York and New Jersey. A large share of Central Americans are also found in California (Matiella, 1988).

Immigration patterns are also different among groups. Usually where there is a large concentration of a certain sub-group, that will greatly influence where the immigrants from a similar background will go.

## SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

### Education

The educational attainment of some Hispanic groups is alarmingly low, a factor that contributes to some of the hardships they face in other areas of their lives. Of these Hispanics who were age 25 or over in 1988, slightly more than half (51 percent) had completed high school. The national figure for the same age group was 76 percent.

Although Hispanics generally have attained less education than the population in general, specific groups of Hispanics have fared better than others in this regard. Hispanics who trace their origins to Central & South America, as well as Cuba, tend to have more education than Puerto Ricans or Mexican-Americans. For example, 64 percent of Central & South American Hispanics age 25 or over had four years of high school or more in 1988, as compared to 61 percent of Cuban Americans, 51 percent of Puerto Ricans and 45 percent of Mexican-Americans of the same age (Bureau of the Census, 1988c).

Since Hispanics have a large younger population, more and more Hispanic children will be entering school. It is estimated that by the year 2000, Hispanics will be 10 percent of the U.S. population and around 16 percent of school age children (Valdivieso & Davis, 1988).

Bilingual education remains a prevalent issue in the education of Hispanics. Many schools lack the programs and resources to handle children who do not speak English well. Spanish is looked down upon, because schools feel that it inhibits learning, and children learn to perceive that their language is a detriment. They must learn English quickly or be left behind. The 1974 Supreme Court case, **Lau v. Nichols**, made significant progress in bilingual education for all children, but recently the "English only" movement has done quite a lot to undermine that progress.

> I just sat in my classes and didn't understand anything. Sometimes I would try to look like I knew what was going on, sometimes I would just try to think about a happy time when I didn't feel stupid. My teachers never called on me or talked to me. I think they either forgot I was there or else wish I wasn't. I waited and waited, thinking someday I will know English.
>
> (Quoted from a Mexican girl who immigrated at age 13, as cited in Olsen, 1988).

## Employment

Hispanics are active members of the country's labor force. The U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that 79 percent of Hispanic males and 52 percent of Hispanic females were either employed or actively looking for a job in 1988. Comparable figures for males and females in the general population were 74 percent and 56 percent respectively (Valdivieso & Davis, 1988).

Although Hispanics are as active as others in the labor force, they are often forced to take lower paying jobs or jobs with less status. The largest proportion of males age 16 and over in the general population reported jobs that the U.S. Bureau of Census classified as managerial and professional specialty in 1988. That job classifcation accounted for 26 percent of all males and 25 percent of all females surveyed that year. Only 13 percent of the Hispanic males, however, and 16 percent of the Hispanic females of the same age reported jobs that were classified similarly. Hispanic males were more likely to report jobs classified as technical, sales and administrative support (15 percent), service occupations (15 percent), precision production, craft and repair (21 percent) or operators, fabricators and laborers (28 percent). Hispanic females were more likely to report jobs that were classified as technical, sales and administrative support (41 percent), service occupations (22 percent), and operators, fabricators and laborers (17 percent) (Bureau of the Census, 1988c).

Hispanics also tend to have jobs that have less job security, a factor that contributes to the high rate of unemployment for Hipanics. For example, 10 percent of Hispanic males and 7 percent of Hispanic females reported that they were unemployed in 1988; that compares to six percent of the males and females respectivley in the general population that said they were currently out of work (Bureau of the Census, 1988c).

By the next century an estimated 16 percent of 18 to 24 year olds will be Hispanic, the age when they will start entering the work force (Valdivieso, and Davis, 1988). To be able to enter successfully into the new high tech work world, it is imperative that Hispanics receive better education.

## Economic Status

Hispanics also suffer from high poverty levels. In 1987, 26 percent of Hispanic families were below the poverty line. In the same year the median family income for Hispanics was $20,306, as compared to a median family income of $31,853 for the general population. Among Hispanics there are vast differences. The median family income for Cuban-Americans for example, was 27, 294, a figure close to that for families nationwide. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the median family income reported by Puerto Ricans was only $15,185 (Bureau of the Census, 1988c).

# THE AMERICAS' SPANISH HERITAGE

In 1492 Spanish ships headed by Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas. Within 50 years the Spanish had conquered and colonized many Caribbean islands, Mexico, Central and South America. These areas stayed under Spanish colonial rule for over three hundred years. By the early part of the Nineteenth Century most of the colonies were unhappy with their treatment under the Spanish. They did not want to be governed by a country that was very distant and did not understand their needs. They wanted independence. Mexico declared independence in 1810 and finally achieved it in 1821. By the end of the third decade of the Nineteenth Century, virtually all of the Spanish American colonies had won their independence. Cuba and Puerto Rico remained under Spanish control until 1898, when Spain was defeated in the Spanish-American War.

With this long history of Spanish domination, Spain left its mark on its former colonies. The language, the religion, certain holidays (religious), and cultural norms, all owe their history to Spain. However each indigenous culture also left its mark to a greater or lesser degree on each former Spanish colony.

The Spanish also left another significant mark on their colonies--a whole new race of people called "mestizos," mixed people of European (mainly Spanish) and Indian ancestry.

Hispanics in general have a very diverse racial background. They are the product of the interrelationships between the native Indians, the Spanish and other Europeans, and Africans. Asians have also contributed to the racial make-up of Hispanics. The U.S. Census Bureau reflects this whenever they speak of Hispanics: "...persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race" (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Sept 11, 1987).

Areas under Spanish rule experienced different degrees of racial mixing. In Mexico and also in sections of Central America and South America the mixture was predominantly Spanish and Indian. In the Caribbean Islands of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic the mixture was more dominated by the combination of Spanish and Africans, and to a lesser extent with the Indian populations. In many sections of Central and South America the combinations were similar to those of the Caribbean Islands, but with a greater Indian influence than in the Islands.

## MEXICAN-AMERICANS: STRANGERS IN THEIR NATIVE LAND

> "It is important to remember that many ancestors of today's U.S. Hispanics were here before the Anglo Settlers arrived on this continent" (O'Hare 1989).

Along with the Indians, Mexicans are natives to the Southwest. They were born of Indian mothers who were natives of the land and of Spanish fathers who explored the area long before the British came to the Americas.

Most of what we call the Southwest (including, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and parts of Wyoming) was Spanish and then Mexican territory. In the years between 1820 and 1850, the United States believed in its "Manifest Destiny" to annex the continent from ocean to ocean.

Mexico, aware of the U.S. doctrine of Manifest Destiny, was concerned about its northern territories. Mexico allowed Anglo settlers into Texas, as long as they agreed to become Mexican citizens, join the Catholic faith, and not to have slaves. Samuel Houston was granted large parcels of land, and he led many Anglo-Americans in to settle in Texas. Mexico hoped that the Anglo settlers would be buffers against U.S. expansion.

Samuel Houston had other ideas of why he was in Texas. He also believed in the "Manifest Destiny" of the Anglo-Americans to rule the continent.

> The Anglo-Saxon race must pervade the whole southern extremity of this vast continent. The Mexicans are no better than the Indians and I see no reason why we should not take their land...
>
> Sam Houston (Chicano Comm. Ctr., 1976).

In 1836, Texas broke with Mexico to become an independent nation, the Lone Star Republic. Many Texas Mexicans agreed with the Anglo-Texans and fought side by side for the secession of Texas from Mexico. The U.S. did not annex Texas right away, wishing to avoid a conflict with Mexico.

In 1845 the United States decided to take Texas as a state, which prompted the Mexican-American War. The United States won the war, and in 1848 Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which ceded over half of its national territory to the U.S. The Mexicans living in the ceded territories were given the option to keep their Mexican citizenship (and given resident alien status) or to take U.S. citizenship. They were given a period of one year to decide what citizenship they wanted. If they did not formally decide within that time, by default they became U.S. citizens. **These Mexicans did not immigrate; the border moved on them.**

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo guaranteed all of the Mexicans residing in the ceded territories who became United States citizens "...all the rights of citizens of the United States, according to the principles of the Constitution..." It also guaranteed to those who became citizens, and those who remained Mexican citizens all rights to their properties.

> Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico,...shall be free to continue where they now reside, or to remove to the Mexican Republic, retaining the property which they possess in the said territories...
>
> In the said territories, property of every kind now belonging to Mexicans not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these, and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it guarantees equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States.
>
> Taken from articles VIII and IX of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (as cited in Lamb, 1970).

This treaty soon became a sham, and the provisions of the treaty, such as those stated above, were ignored. The land rights were not respected and Mexicans, even those who were now "Americans," lost their land. They were cheated out of it, or physically thrown off of it. The "Gold Rush" in California, the introduction of the railroads, and cattle ranching all had a part in the dispossession of the Mexicans from their land. The activist Reies Tijerina during the 1960s and 1970s in New Mexico tried to bring attention to the Mexicans dispossession of their land.

### The Twentieth Century

During the early part of this century and continuing into the 1920s American business was booming. To keep up with the demand for workers, Americans brought in Mexicans to provide cheap labor in the fields and the factories. Many of the Mexican urban enclaves like those in Chicago and Detroit were created during this period.

In the 1930s the atmosphere changed for the Mexican workers. The depression came and many people including the Mexicans were out of work. Politicians and businessmen alike took Mexicans as the scapegoats for the country's economic problems. To try to solve the problem of job competition, the government decided to "repatriate" the Mexicans. Thousands were deported, many of them American citizens.

During World War II, the U.S. implemented the "Bracero" program. Due to the war there was a labor shortage, and "Braceros" or Mexican workers were brought to this country to work for a company, usually agricultural, that had invited them. When the work was done they were sent back to Mexico until they were needed again. Many of the "Braceros" stayed in the U.S., and those who went back told stories of jobs and a chance at a better life. Many of the immigrants came to this country in search of a better life, just as those who came from all parts of Europe, but the Mexican immigrants were not as welcome as were their European counterparts. The "Bracero" program lasted until 1965 when it was discontinued by Congress.

Today many people continue to immigrate from Mexico. They are escaping extreme poverty and are in search of a better life. Mexico is a major source of legal and undocumented immigrants to the United States.. Undocumented immigrants are working in low paying, hard labor jobs that would otherwise go unfilled and are a source of cheap labor.

## PUERTO RICANS: AMERICAN BY CONQUEST

On November 19, 1493 Christopher Columbus and his men landed on an island, which the indigenous Indians called Boriquen, that they were to call Puerto Rico literally "Rich Port" because they found gold. The Spanish introduced the "encomienda" system which was similar to the indentured servant system used in the British colonies. As the native Indian population died out from overwork, malnutrition and disease, the Spanish turned to African slaves to meet their labor needs. In 1503 the Spanish Crown granted permission to import African slaves to the Americas. By the 17th century the population of Puerto Rico could be described as white, Black and mulatto. The culture of the island became a mesh of African and Spanish. An example of this is religion which is a mixture of Catholicism and African religious beliefs. Slavery was abolished on the island in 1873 (Lopez, 1980).

Despite movements for independence, starting with the "Lares Revolt" lead by Ramon Betances in 1868, Spanish elites fearing slave revolts and loss of control prevented the move towards independence. The island remained under Spanish rule until 1898.

In 1898, the United States gained control of Puerto Rico after its victory over Spain in the Spanish-American War. The island was annexed as a territory and later became a commonwealth of the United States. In 1917 Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship. (Thousands of young Puerto Ricans were enlisted in the U.S. army and died in Europe.) Puerto Ricans were now free to enter and leave the U.S. mainland as they pleased. This set up a unique dilemma. As U.S. citizens (by birth) they were not subject to immigration laws, but because of their linguistic and cultural difference from the majority, they were treated as immigrants.

Today, Puerto Ricans living on the island--even though they are citizens-- are not allowed to vote for the President. They have only one representative in Congress who is allowed to speak, but who does not have a vote. Puerto Rico is headed by a governor who is freely elected by the people.

Major migration began in the 1940s due to economic problems on the island and because the mainland industrial cities appeared to offer better opportunities. Migration was facilitated by low air fares authorized at the request of the government. Upon their arrival on the mainland, Puerto Ricans faced cultural and racial discrimination. Most came to earn a better living, but the majority had plans of moving back to the island. Their dreams of a better life did not completely materialize; they remain the poorest of all Hispanic groups (Lopez, 1980).

Puerto Ricans are mainly concentrated in New York and New Jersey. There is a continuing migration of islanders to the mainland for educational opportunities, and many remain due to job opportunities. Puerto Ricans are different from Mexicans and Cubans because they are able to go back and forth between the island and the mainland more easily than the other immigrant groups.

## CUBAN IMMIGRATIONS

In 1492 after landing on the island of Hispañola, which is now shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Columbus charted the coast of Cuba before returning to Spain. Soon after Cuba along

with other Caribbean islands were conquered and colonized. As with Puerto Rico, the indigenous Indian population began to die out due to disease and overwork, African slaves were brought in to meet labor needs. After a relatively short time the population could also be described as White, Black and Mulatto. The mixture of African and Spanish traditions can be observed today, as in the religious beliefs and the musical traditions.

> The Cuban presence in Florida dates back to the 1830s when Cuban cigar manufacturers, trying to avoid high U.S. tariffs, relocated their operations in Key West. The city provided an ideal setting for cigar production, since it offered easy access to the tobacco regions of western Cuba and the commercial centers of Havanna [sic] (Masud-Piloto, 1988).

Cuban Americans are political refugees. The first major wave of Cuban immigrants came as a result of the Communist takeover in 1959. Most were from the upper middle to upper class that fled persecution. The majority of them came with a high educational level, and these were mostly white collar professionals. Extended families were separated during the immigration process, as some were not able to leave before the communist takeover.

The second wave came around 1980 (the Mariel Sealift), these immigrants had a harder time adjusting to their new environment because they were poorer, and they had lower educational levels. They did, however, have some advantages over many other immigrant groups because they came to an established Cuban community located mostly in Miami/Dade County, Florida.

Cubans are concentrated mostly in the Miami metropolitan area and in central Florida. As political refugees, Cubans are not able to return to their homeland. This has been especially difficult on the older generation.

## EL SALVADOREANS, GUATEMALANS, NICARAGUANS: RECENT TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION

In recent times Central Americans have come here in increasing numbers. Due to political strife and extreme poverty in their countries, more and more are making their way north every year. Many of those who arrive seek political asylum from their war torn nations. A large number find themselves being taken back to the place from which they have just fled. Most of them are poor and illiterate and have scraped together all they have to make the trip here only to be sent back by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). There has been recent immigration legislation confining them to detention centers in Southern Texas while a decision is made on their request for political asylum. Many Central Americans are also being held at detention centers in Miami, Florida, although some have settled in California and other parts of the United States. As in the case of Mexican immigrants, families are often separated in the immigration process. Children are arriving in this country alone in hopes of finding a better life.

## SOUTH AMERICANS

South Americans are also immigrating to this country but in much smaller numbers than other Hispanics. Because of the distance involved usually only those with a lot of money can afford to make the trip here. Most of those coming to the U.S., are professionals of high degree like surgeons, engineers, biochemists, etc. They are well trained and highly educated and make the transition to U.S. professional life quite easily. Most have a good knowledge of English before coming here (Valdivieso & Davis, 1988).

## THE HISPANIC AGENDA

### Growing Population

The Hispanic population is the fastest growing in the country, this trend is presumed to continue well into the next century. This growth will have a profound impact on public policy making, education, political representation, service implementation, the labor force, and other areas of our society.

### Census Counts

There have been efforts made to prevent the inclusion of undocumented persons in census counts. For example, a recent court case, **Ridge v. Verity**, challenged the constitutionality of including undocumented immigrants in census count. The case was thrown out of court. The Constitution states that all persons, in the United States shall be counted in the census. Congressman Ridge is now sponsoring the Census Equity Act, which is currently pending. A bill, with similar aims to exclude undocumented persons in the census, was sponsored by Senator Shelby of Alabama. It has already passed in the Senate. Attempts like these, to undermine Hispanic political representation and to limit services to the Hispanic population are being backed by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the same group behind the "English only" movement (Camarillo, 1989).

### Immigration Law

Historically, immigration legislation has been targeted at Hispanic groups and has affected the Hispanic community in many important ways. For example, limiting the number of immigrants allowed in during a given year affects all Hispanics (except for Puerto Ricans). At other times, legislation designed to assist immigrants has often fallen short, for example, the 1986 Immigration Reform Act which outlined a path to citizenship for those undocumented immigrants. Those who could prove that they had resided in the United States since 1982 were given temporary resident status. Many individuals did not come forward because they did not have the required documents. They were fearful and not trusting of the INS, an agency which they had learned to evade.

### Future Work Force Impact

By the turn of the century Hispanics will make up the majority of entry level workers. As the general population ages and leaves the work force, the younger growing population of Hispanics will enter into the job market. By the year 2000 the younger Hispanics will account for 22 percent of the growth in the labor force; however,the manufacturing and manual labor jobs that were historically filled by Hispanics are disappearing. "...If the current occupational profile of Hispanics is maintained, they would occupy only 5 percent of the jobs in the year 2000" (Valdivieso and Davis, 1988). Hispanics and other minorities are concentrated in lower skill level jobs while future jobs will require high level skills. More education is needed to prepare Hispanics for the new skilled, technological employment fields (Johnston & Packer, 1987).

### Economic Impact

Hispanics suffer from higher poverty levels than non-Hispanics, but it is estimated that nationwide the Hispanic market is worth $130 billion dollars a year. This market is relatively untapped, but new Spanish language advertising is starting to reach this hidden market. Hispanics have the potential to be a major commercial force in this country. As more Hispanics are employed, this market share will continue upwards.

### Education

As the employment picture changes from unskilled to high skilled labor needs, Hispanics will be left behind without an education. Immigrants and native citizens alike require bilingual programs, math and science, and many other programs to be able to complete in the job market successfully.

> For me, they shouldn't have put me in Basic Math. I should have been in Algebra. But there is more English vocabulary in Algebra so they said I couldn't take it until I learned more English. I felt I was spending time with things I already knew, but then that's required of Latin immigrants. We waste our time because we don't know English yet.
>
> (Quoted from a Mexican student who immigrated at age 14, as cited in Olsen, 1988).

### "English only"

"English only" is a movement which claims that this country's official language should be declared English. Further, those in the movement think that the newly arrived Hispanics and Asians wish to remain in their own communities, living and working there, and not having to learn English or adapt to American society.

The "English only" movement has been directed at Hispanics and Asians, and it threatens the few bilingual programs that do exist. "...The appeal of this movement results from a variety of sources--patriotism, fear of the consequences of bilingualism, visions of uncontrollable immigration, a misunderstanding of the movement's true agenda, chauvinism, and racism" (N.C.A.S., 1988).

> "Because it arises from attitudes that those who speak only English are somehow superior to those who speak other languages, it sends a clear message to newcomers that their languages and cultures are unwelcome and inferior..." (N.C.A.S., 1988).

When "English only" legislation passes, it usually means that the state may not print, disseminate, or provide services bilingually. Currently, in the State of Michigan driver's license tests are printed in Spanish and English. Voting ballots can be requested in Spanish. Court translators are allowed to help Spanish speaking defendants and plaintiffs. For example, if "English only" were to pass in Michigan, all of these services would be cut or made illegal.

The "English only" legislation has passed in 17 states. This legislation has resulted in employment discrimination, affected the fairness of the judicial system, and impacted Hispanic voting rights in these states. A similar movement known as "U.S. English" is working to have English declared the official language of the United States. The effects of this type of legislation on the civil rights of Hispanics are broad and could have a lasting impact.

### Political Representation and Participation

Hispanics are adding tremendously to the growth of the U.S. as a whole but more importantly to a few states in particular. Many of these states, like California and Texas, are very important to the Presidential races because of their electoral votes. The Hispanic growth in these states will make them even more important to Presidential elections and will also shift the balance in Congress.

## NEW IMAGE OF HISPANICS

Hispanics have made great contributions to American society and are an integral part of our nation's heritage. Many of our American cities and states stand as reminders of our Hispanic

heritage: Los Angeles, San Antonio, San Francisco, Colorado, Florida, California, etc. Many Spanish words have become part of our everyday English: Fiesta, siesta, rodeo, mesa, lasso from lazo, ranch from rancho, etc.

Hispanics have contributed significantly to the arts and drama. Hispanics like Carlos Santana and Diego Rivera have influenced American music and arts. In the movies and television the images of Hispanics are slowly changing from stereotypical images to strong characters portrayed by Hispanic actors and actresses such as Linda Carter, Edward James Olmos, Jimmy Smits, Elizabeth Peña, Raquel Welch, Charlie Sheen and many others. In politics there are Hispanics in many levels of government from state to federal, from Mayor Suarez in Miami to Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos, with many steps in between.

## CONCLUSION

Hispanics in the United States, as we have seen, comprise a large and diverse group of people. This brief description of the history and heritage of Hispanics in the United States cannot give a complete picture of this diverse population.

A problem that we faced was the difficulty in locating good information sources. We also found that much of the literature deals more with one group than another and many groups are virtually ignored. This introduction is only a basic overview into Hispanic issues. We hope that you will continue to learn more about America's fastest growing ethnic group.

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